LORD CHAITANYA LIBERATES THE DOG

from *Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila,* Chapter 1
adapted by Dasarath Suta Das

SCENE ONE

CAST: Narrator, Shivananda Sena, Dog, Boatman, Devotees, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Narrator: When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Jagannath Puri after His tour of Vrindavan, Swarupa Damodara Goswami immediately sent news of the Lord's arrival to the devotees in Navadvipa, West Bengal. Upon hearing this news, mother Shachi and all the other devotees of Navadvipa were very joyful, and they departed together for the long trip on foot to Nilachala (Jagannath Puri). Thus all the devotees of Kulina-gram and Sri Khanda, as well as Advaita Acharya, came together to meet Shivananda Sena. Shivananda Sena arranged for the journey. He maintained everyone and provided residential quarters. While going to Jagannath Puri, Shivananda Sena allowed a dog to go along with them. He supplied it food to eat and maintained it. One day, when they needed to cross a river, an Orissan boatman would not allow the dog to get in the boat.

Boatman: Hey, wait a minute here! Your party is welcome to come in my boat, but that street dog has to stay behind!

Shivananda: This dog is traveling along with us. He must come across the river in your boat, for I cannot leave him behind.

Boatman: I'm sorry, sir, this is my boat and I'm not allowing any filthy dog on board!

Shivananda: I will gladly pay extra for the dog's passage. Here is one *pana* (80 pieces) of conchshells for you to let him come along.

Boatman: No, no, I cannot compromise on my principles. No dogs aboard my boat!

Shivananda: Then please take these ten *pana* (800 pieces) of conchshells to take the dog across the river.

Boatman: Oh well, maybe just this once I will be happy to oblige you! Thank you very much, sir everyone watch your step as you come aboard! **(all exit)**

Narrator: One day while Shivananda was detained by a tollman, his servant forgot to give the dog its usual portion of cooked rice. At night, when

Shivananda Sena returned and was taking his meal, he inquired from the servant whether the dog had gotten its meal.

Shivananda: Ah, this Krishna-*prasadam* is very nice! Tell me, while I was gone did you feed the dog as usual?

Devotee: Oh, the dog! I completely forgot about feeding him!

Shivananda: What?! How could you forget? That dog is a devotee, too, as well as our friend! Oh, this is terrible! Where is the dog right now?

Devotee: I don't know, I haven't seen him for quite a while.

Shivananda: Oh no, this is a grave offense we have committed unto a devotee! This makes me very unhappy. We've got to find the dog right away. Let's organize a search party. Everyone! Come over here! You ten men, immediately spread out and try to find the dog.

Devotee: **(they search and then return)** We're sorry, Shivananda Prabhu, we looked everywhere but could find no trace of the dog.

Shivananda: This makes me very unhappy. Now I shall fast for the night. If I could not feed even the humblest member of our party, why then should I personally enjoy eating a meal? Let us take rest now. **(Devotees rest as lights fade and Narrator speaks)**

Narrator: Shivananda Sena's attachment to the dog was a great boon for that animal. The dog appears to have been a street dog. Since it naturally began to follow Shivananda Sena while he was going to Jagannath Puri with his party, he accepted it into his party and maintained it the same way he was maintaining the other devotees. It appears that although on one occasion the dog was not allowed aboard a boat, Shivananda did not leave the dog behind but paid more money just to induce the boatman to take the dog across the river. Then when the servant forgot to feed the dog and the dog disappeared, Shivananda, being very anxious, sent ten men to find it. When they could not find it, Shivananda observed a fast. Thus it appears that somehow or other Shivananda had become attached to the dog.

SCENE TWO

Narrator: In the morning everyone again looked for the dog, but it could not be found anywhere. Thus in great anxiety they all walked onwards to Jagannath Puri, where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu met them as usual. When all the devotees came to the place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, they saw the same dog, sitting a little apart from the Lord. All the Vaishnavas were astonished.

Devotee: Shivananda, look! There's the dog sitting near the Lord! It appears that the dog went ahead of us and arrived in Puri first.

Shivananda: Behold Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, smiling in His own way and throwing remnants of green coconut pulp to the dog!

Lord Chaitanya: Chant the holy names Rama, Krishna, and Hari!

Dog: *Rama! Krishna! Hari!*

Lord Chaitanya: Chant Krishna! Krishna!

Dog: *Krishna! Krishna!*

Devotee: This is amazing! We've never seen anything like it! The dog is eating the coconut pulp and chanting Krishna, Krishna again and again!

Shivananda: Seeing the dog sitting in that way and chanting the name of Krishna, I shall immediately offer my obeisances to the dog just to counteract my offenses to it. **(he bows down. Dog suddenly vanishes)**

Devotee: Where did the dog suddenly go? It was just here enjoying the *prasadam* remnants of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Did anybody see where it went?

Lord Chaitanya: That dog has obtained its spiritual body and departed for Vaikuntha, the spiritual kingdom. This is the result of *sadhu-sanga,* association with all of you great souls. By your mercy the dog was promoted back home, back to Godhead. Therefore, everyone in the human form of life should be induced to associate with devotees. By rendering a little service, even by eating *prasadam,* not to speak of chanting and dancing, everyone could be promoted to Vaikuntha-loka. By your mercy, all the people of the world will be transferred to Vaikuntha-loka, even without their knowledge. Everyone should be given a chance to take *prasadam* and thus be induced to chant the holy names Hare Krishna and also dance in ecstasy. By these three processes, although performed without knowledge or education, even an animal went back to Godhead. **(everyone does soft *kirtan*)**

Narrator: Such are the transcendental pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the son of mother Shachi. He even delivered a dog simply by inducing it to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra.* The dog got the mercy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and was immediately promoted to Vaikuntha to become an eternal devotee. Srila Bhaktivinoda

Thakura has therefore sung in *Sharanagati,* song 19 – *tumi to' Thakura, tomara kukkura, boliya janaha more* – He thus offers to become the dog of a Vaishnava. There are many other instances in which the pet animal of a devotee was delivered back home to Vaikuntha-loka, back to Godhead. Such is the benefit of somehow or other becoming the favorite of a Vaishnava. We may conclude that even as dogs we must take shelter of a devotee. The benefit will be the same as that which accrues to an advanced devotee under a Vaishnava's care.

The End